

### Early Stag Beetles (*Lucanus cervus* L.) in Colchester

The early emergence of Stag Beetles in South London during 1990 (Morris, 1991 *Ent. Rec.* **103**: 106) was also observed in the species' other British stronghold in the Colchester area of north-east Essex. Males were observed around the Castle Park, Colchester during the first two weeks of May 1990 several weeks earlier than is usual. The Colchester Museum Biological Records Centre holds two other early stag beetle records, both for 1974 — Lexden, 15th May and Stratford St Mary, April. A survey undertaken in the Colchester area in the 1960s (Clark, 1964, *Essex Nat.* **31**: 167-172) found that the peak date for records of males was 3rd July and for females 11th July.— JERRY BOWDREY, Colchester Museums, 14 Ryegate Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1YG.

### *Thereva plebeia* (L.) (Dipt.: Therevidae): a recent find in E. Kent.

On 21st May 1991, while collecting near Graveney on the shore of the Swale between Faversham and Seasalter, with my friends Mr S.A. Williams and Prof. J.A. Owen, I found a dipterous pupa (obviously Therevid) at roots of herbage in dry, slightly sandy soil alongside a breakwater. On 7th June it was seen to have produced a male imago, which had probably emerged a day or so earlier. It closely resembled the common *Thereva nobilitata* (F.), which I had expected it to be, but careful examination revealed important differences and it was finally identified from Oldroyd, 1969, *Handbk Ident. Br. Insects*, **9**(4a): 99, 102, as *T. plebeia*.

The really decisive structural feature visible externally is the hooked process of the male terminalia in lateral view (fig. 235, p.99), more or less hidden among the long hairs but evident when they are moved a little aside. This is far easier to see without dissection than the sole (rather obscure) character given in the key (p. 102) for the male of *plebeia*. Comparative differences from *nobilitata* in that sex, shown by my specimen, are the yellower occipital hairs and the thicker, rather longer and much more golden-yellow hair of the basal abdominal segments, especially at the sides.

*Thereva plebeia* was formerly not rare in the south-east and midlands, but its status is now upgraded to "notable" (Falk, 1991, A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain, **1**: 110)\* It is stated there that "only a handful of modern sites have so far been confirmed"; and that it was recently reared from a larva found by Prof. Owen in the soil of an allotment at Epsom, Surrey. The habitat of my specimen is, perhaps, scarcely typical.— A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

\*I am greatly obliged to Mr Falk for a copy of this most informative and useful work, published by the Nature Conservancy Council as No. 39 of the series Research and Survey in Nature Conservation.